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THEOSOPHY IN CHRISTIANITY

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Theosophy in Christianity

CHRISTIANITY, like all other religions, is part of the Wisdom of God—*Theosophia*—Theosophy. The only men in the world who are fully cognisant of the Ancient Wisdom—ancient because it is as eternal as God from Whom it flows—are those men who have finished their strictly human evolution through many lives lived in the world—many days passed in God's great school, this earth—and who, having reached the full consciousness of their own oneness with the Eternal and Supreme, in Whom we "live and move and have our being," long and work to hasten the time when their fellow-men shall attain the same glorious consciousness of the mysterious and glorious depths of their own inmost being—ever divine, though at present they know, and perhaps even suspect, it not. There is no difference whatever in origin and essence between those who have already attained and those who have not yet attained, for *all* life (even the so-called "lower" kingdoms—

animal, vegetable, and mineral) comes from Him, and to Him will at last return. At the same time there *is* a great difference, in that the Divine Men have completely unified or "at-oned" their Will with that of the Supreme, while the rest of humanity and the other kingdoms have not yet done so. The former know, while the latter do not yet know, the Divinity of their own inmost being. All weakness and sin are the result of ignorance, an ignorance which is in course of being changed into knowledge in God's great school, as fast as we ourselves will permit, for "the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" never forces its way, and we have it in our power to shut it out, although even such shutting gradually brings its own remedy, for it leads us into unwise courses of action, by which we bruise ourselves against "the Good Law," that brings to every man, in the course of successive lives, the exact results of his own behaviour towards the innumerable other "fragments of Divinity," whether for joy or pain, weal or woe.

The Divine Men who have attained "liberation" from birth and death, and have the right and power, if they so choose, to pass away altogether from the world into loftier states of being—higher "planes" of existence—remain here for the helping

of their younger brothers of the human, animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, and are employed by the Supreme as His Agents for their leading and guidance. Living and working as They do in the most perfect accord with Him and with each other, They constitute a Great Brotherhood, which is sometimes called "the Great White Lodge." They do not, however, live together so far as Their physical bodies are concerned, for They *have* physical bodies, though it is only at certain times in the world's history that They come before men into the ordinary publicity of the world. They live in various parts of the world, and yet They are in constant communication with one another on the higher planes, in which Their true life is centred, and where physical separation is no barrier to the freest interchange of ideas.

In this Brotherhood the work is divided, for convenience of administration, into different departments, one of which is devoted to the spiritual instruction and helping of the world; and at the head of that Department stands a very Great One (for there are differences in Wisdom and Power even among Those who have already filled Their hearts with Divine Love) and this One is called the World-Teacher, the Light of the World, Teacher of Angels and of Men. He acts as a

kind of Prime Minister to the actual Head of the Hierarchy (the Great White Lodge) Who is sometimes referred to as "The One Initiator," because the Great Initiations, which mark the stages of progress on the Path of Holiness, are always conferred by His express authority and in His name. The World-Teacher acts also as a Minister of Religion to "the King" and Himself founds, either in person or through a deputy, a member of the Great Brotherhood specially appointed for the purpose, every religion that appears in the world. The Founder of a religion does not, of course, attempt to give to the world His own knowledge in its entirety, which would be an impossibility; but, having regard to the time, place and people for whom it is intended, He selects from the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom such as He sees to be most helpful in the particular circumstances.

It thus happens that while each religion has its own leading idea, upon which special stress is laid, certain important and fundamental truths appear in all; and it is possible, by means of appropriate quotations from the various Scriptures of the world, to prove that the same great truths are taught in each. In Mrs. Besant's most helpful *Universal Text-Book of Religion and Morals* these common teachings are tabulated as follows:

"The Unity of God—One Self-dependent Life, pervading all things and binding them all together in mutual relations and dependence.

"The Manifestation of God in a universe under Three Aspects.

"The Hierarchies of Spiritual Beings.

"Incarnation of Spirit.

"The two basic laws of Causation and of Sacrifice.

"The Three Worlds of Human Evolution.

"The Brotherhood of Man."

None of these truths is the exclusive property of any particular religion. They belong to what may be called Universal Religion, and abundant quotations are given from the Scriptures of all the great religions, Hindū, Zoroastrian, Hebrew, Christian, Muhammadan, and Sikh, to show that these teachings, which may be assumed to be fundamental, are indeed common to all. For any one who will carefully study it, this collection of varied statements, in each case, of the same truth is highly instructive, as they illuminate and confirm one another, in very much the same way as a collection of texts on any one subject from, say, the Christian Scriptures.

The teachings which have been given to the world by the Theosophical Society, founded in New York in 1875, and now

having branches in nearly every country of the world, are drawn, equally with those of all religions, from the one Ancient Wisdom, and of course include the fundamental truths mentioned above; but, as Theosophy is far more recent than even Muhammadanism (the youngest except the Sikh, of the family of religions) in fact 1,400 years younger, the world was ripe for a much fuller and clearer presentation of the facts of nature in the broadest sense, including God and Man. The fact of reincarnation had been known and taught in the Hinḍū and Buḍḍhist religions for thousands of years, but without the slightest attempt to explain scientifically and in detail the method of rebirth, the nature of the subtler planes of existence, their relation to the physical, the subtle bodies in which the interval between births is passed, or the exact stages of the progress from one physical body to the next. So long as even the fact of reincarnation was withheld (and it seems to have been deliberately withdrawn by direction of the Founder of Christianity, the World-Teacher, from the western world) it would have been comparatively useless to give scientific teaching about the subtle bodies and the (to our eyes) invisible inner worlds; but now, through the Society, reincarnation has been as deliberately restored.

We learn, for the first time in the West,

that man is evolving spiritually by means of repeated births in the physical body, and that the law of cause and effect in the moral world, the sowing and reaping of good and evil, is carried out not entirely, or even chiefly, in one and the same body, but rather from life to life. Thus much is in its broad outline easy to understand, and will probably be the common belief of all cultured people within a generation from the present time ; but those who care to study may learn much more than this; for Theosophy contains much detailed and fascinating information as to God's plan of evolution, so far as it relates to man at his present stage. We may learn in much detail of worlds invisible to our physical senses, and of subtle vehicles which we possess even while living here in the world, in which we shall continue to live after the loss of the physical body at death, and in which we shall pass the long interval between death and rebirth. The invisible worlds, and the life which man leads in them after death, are described for us by eye-witnesses. We learn, too, that the process or cycle of repeated births and deaths, however long it may last, is but a passing stage in evolution, the preparation for a glorious condition of superhuman Love and Wisdom, to which we shall all surely attain in the long run (because it is God's

will that we should do so) but to which our own efforts assisted by the divine grace, which never forces its way, can alone conduct us; and that the process of attaining this far higher condition can be enormously quickened by those who are willing to make special efforts—to leave, in fact, the beaten high road which scales in many spirals the mountain of achievement, and to breast the ascent in its steepest but swiftest form, which is called the Path of Holiness, because it leads to that state fairly rapidly and in the course of a comparatively few lives. We learn of the Great Gateways, or Initiations, which mark first the entrance to that Path and then the various stages of achievement. And—perhaps most interesting of all for us at our present stage—we learn the qualifications prescribed by the Head of the Hierarchy Himself, "the ONE INITIATOR," which must be developed by would-be entrants while still living the ordinary life in the world, ere they can pass the Gateway which stands at the entrance. Over that Gate is written the word "Service," for by service alone can we hope to enter the Path. The power which enables us to hasten our own evolution comes from our elder Brethren (the Divine Men, who are for us the channels of divine grace) and is held in trust for the whole race, not for particular

individuals. If, therefore, it is given in special abundance to a comparatively small number, that is not from any favouritism, but simply because those individuals are willing and have fitted themselves to take part in the Masters' work, and because the force given to them will produce in this way a better result for the whole of humanity than it would in any other.

Theosophy not only tells us all this, of profound interest and importance for Christians as for all other men, but it also comes to us straight and fresh from the Divine Men who are the Guides and Guardians of our race ; and this is a great advantage, for it is not yet overlaid by the materialising tendency, innate in the human mind, which inevitably obscures, as time goes on, every fresh presentation of divine truth. All religions gradually go down-hill with the lapse of time, though perhaps this is not an unmixed drawback, as the decadent stages may be, and doubtless are, utilised for the training of souls who could not at present accept a purer, more enlightened, form of religion. The gradual decadence arises from the fact that the Founder and His immediate disciples are, of course, much more highly evolved than those whom they come to teach, and, as the former gradually pass from among men, the sublime teachings

are more and more misunderstood and materialised by men who are unfitted to sense the deeper meanings, and do not even suspect their existence, but adhere rigidly to the outer husk. Spiritual truths must from their very nature be expressed in symbolism, and in the Scriptures of the world advantage is taken of that fact in order to provide at the same time and in the same words teaching for different classes of souls—for those who cannot yet see beyond "the letter that killeth" as well as for others who, having eyes to perceive and ears to hear, can to some extent receive "the spirit which giveth life."

This process of the substitution of the letter for the spirit was to a large extent completed in the Christian Church as early as the 4th or 5th century of our era, when the orthodox but ignorant majority succeeded in expelling from it the few Gnostics (or Knowers), the Mystics of the early Church. From one point of view, Theosophy is but a revival, a rebirth, of Gnosticism; but, owing to the development of modern science, men are now capable of receiving much more definite information as to the existence and nature of those subtle invisible worlds which interpenetrate the physical, and as to the broad details of human evolution, the existence of Divine Guides and Teachers,

and of a path of Holiness which leads from our level to Theirs, and is trodden in the world during a short series of lives taken in quick succession.

The most important difference between Theosophy and ordinary Christianity is the teaching of reincarnation—that all men, whether or not they may be aware of the fact, are really undergoing a process of spiritual evolution, for which purpose they are born again and again into the world, each life being, as it were, but a single day of the immortal Spirit, passed in God's great school, the world, which is fitted to be a school of experience for men at all stages of growth from a savage to a Divine Man, a Liberated Soul.

All enlightened Christians are giving up the ghastly theory of eternal damnation, and the almost equally crude idea that the ultimate and eternal fate of every soul is settled at death. The fact is beginning to be recognised and admitted that, apart from the loss of the physical body, no immediate change occurs at death, the man's character and knowledge being exactly the same afterwards as they were before; and that his spiritual education or evolution must therefore be carried on *somewhere*, though it is assumed, for no obvious reason, that this further evolution will be conducted on some other planet or in some other world. The reply to such a

suggestion is clear. If, as seems obvious enough, we have not yet learned all that the physical plane has to teach us, is it not necessary that we should return (after our night's rest, first in purgatory and afterwards in heaven) to *a* physical planet, and, if so, why not to this one? If, as present-day orthodoxy *assumes*, for it is nowhere stated in the Scriptures, each soul is a new creation at birth, then perhaps it might not be an unreasonable speculation that the "dip-down," the descent to earth, was for a single occasion only; but such a speculation is negatived by the extraordinary difference in the conditions into which individuals are born —some amid virtue and refinement, others amid vice and squalor, some to happiness others to misery, some to luxury others to want, some to care and love others to cruelty and ill-treatment. Is there no cause for all this? Are the Love and Wisdom of the Supreme at fault? "Shall a man be more just than his Maker?" On the other hand, with the keys of Reincarnation and Karma in our hands, all falls into its place. Once more we breathe again: "God's in His heaven, all's well with the world." If we have all lived before many times upon this earth, then it does not take much faith to believe that these differences, which before seemed so cruel and unjust, are but the working

of the "Good Law," which brings to every man according to his deeds; and, though we try to sympathise to the utmost with all who are at present unhappy, we need not assume that they are sinners beyond other men, for we know that each life is but a single day at school, and if "to-day" (this life) brings tears, "to-morrow" (next life) may bring sunshine. Further, an unhappy life, wisely and patiently endured, brings wisdom. That is always the result of Karma cheerfully endured; and even a bad life, if there has been some good mixed with the bad, as there nearly always is, is surely followed, after the temporary condition of purgatory, by the highest bliss of which the soul is capable at its present stage of evolution. Its power to enjoy is limited only by the size of its own cup, and the soul is blissfully unconscious of any limitation to its happiness.

If reincarnation in some physical world is necessary for our further evolution, why not on this earth, and what greater difficulty would there be in our being born here on the next occasion than there was this time? We do, in fact, see people evolving and learning at every possible stage on this earth; what difficulty is there in believing that these differences are largely due to the number of lives that each has had in the human kingdom—the number of days passed in the great school?

It would be hard to frame any other explanation; but this is not all, for those who have developed the power to see on other planes, even as we ourselves see in the physical world, tell us that reincarnation is no theory but an obvious fact, for they see the souls at all stages on the way up and down. And the contradictions which sometimes reach us, through spiritualistic mediums, from the departed carry no weight, for the souls who utter them are in no better position than we are ourselves to know at first hand whether reincarnation is a fact, inasmuch as they cannot see or sense the souls who have already passed on into the heaven-world, much less know what will happen to them when their bliss in that world comes to an end.

For lack of a knowledge of reincarnation, Christians have assumed that each soul is a new creation at birth, but is this a philosophical view? There is indeed such a thing as creation. Theosophy itself teaches it most fully, but not a creation out of nothing. The ancient maxim *Ex nihilo nihil fit*—"Out of nothing nothing can be made"—is certainly sound, and is in no way contradicted by Theosophical teaching about creation. The worlds and all that is in them, on all planes, physical and superphysical, up to the highest of the three Nirvāṇic planes recognised in Theosophy, *are* deliberately

created by the Blessed Trinity and their hosts of Agents, but out of subtler matter still, which antedates and survives the period of existence of a solar system, almost infinite as that period may appear to our limited powers of conception. One may say that the lower planes, which are comparatively temporary, are, as it were, "unrolled" from or out of higher planes still. But this is all in reference to the Form side—to matter, of however high or subtle an order. What can be said of the Life, except that it shares—that all the innumerable life-centres which come into manifestation in a solar system share—the eternity of their source, the One Life,—from which they proceed, in which, in spite of this apparent "proceeding," they ever continue to inhere, to "live and move and have their being," and to which they eventually return, when the Supreme Being of the system withdraws all to Himself, that God may once more "be all in all"—until in due course, and at however distant a period, the innumerable lives shall again stream forth, in appearance, from the bosom of the Father, to begin their new day upon the ceaseless and beginningless "Wheel of Life." In the beautiful words of Sir Edwin Arnold's *Song Celestial* (a metrical translation of a Hindū Scripture, the immortal *Bhagavad-Gītā* or *The Lord's Song*):

Never the spirit was born, the spirit shall cease to be never.
Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams.
Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit for ever.
Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems.

If, as Theosophy teaches, there is but One Life in existence, then must we all share the eternity of our origin, substance, and final goal; and the great teaching of reincarnation shows us that death (as it appears to us) and immortality are in no way incompatible or self-contradictory. To quote Sir Edwin Arnold again:

Nay but as when one layeth
His worn-out robes away
And, taking new ones, sayeth
"These will I wear to-day,"
So putteth by the spirit
Lightly its garb of flesh
And passeth to inherit
A residence afresh.

This teaching about reincarnation is not expressly given, it is true, in the Christian Scriptures, or to be more precise, it is not insisted on; but it is more than implied in the Christ's saying about S. John the Baptist: "If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come" (Matthew xi, 11) and again, in reference to the man which was blind from his birth: "Neither

has this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John i, 9). This clearly shows that there is a possibility of a man's sinning before he is born, and it contradicts the current orthodox belief, that every soul is new-created at birth. It is, to say the least, perfectly consistent with, and strongly suggestive of, the idea of a previous birth or births.

On the other hand, the fact that these slight references to reincarnation are the only ones in the Christian Scriptures points to the probability of a statement which has been made, and which on other grounds is quite likely to be true, that the Christ ultimately decided to let the knowledge of Reincarnation die out of the Western world and the religion which He had founded, and that for the following reason. The central idea which He wished to give to the world was "Self-Sacrifice" —the note of true brotherhood—but for this the world was not yet ripe. Before men could be built into a Brotherhood—before a Church could be formed, whose ordinary individual members (the rank and file, the ordinary communicants, and not merely the very exceptional saint) would be ready and willing to make practical sacrifice the leading note of their lives —before such a Church could be built, it was necessary to build the Brothers of

whom it would be composed, and in His wisdom He saw that the best and quickest way of inducing men to make the necessary exertion for spiritual growth would be to withhold from them the knowledge that they had really many lives before them in which to evolve, and to let them conclude that their whole future depended upon the way in which the present life was led.

This was a strong measure and in one way nearly wrecked the civilisation for which the religion was intended—that of modern Europe—and probably contributed to bring about that long period of spiritual and intellectual gloom known as "the Dark Ages," when, outside the walls of convent and monastery, might was the only recognised right and violence reigned supreme. For, without a knowledge of reincarnation, it is impossible logically to make sense or justice of the world, or to recognise the Wisdom and Love of the Supreme. Men are obviously born into sets of conditions which are extraordinarily different from one another. Some are born into comfort and abundance, others into want and misery; some into vicious surroundings, others into virtue, true religion, and refinement. Some are so situated that it is difficult for them from infancy to do right, while for others it would appear to be almost equally difficult not to be pious and virtuous. Now if, as

is popularly supposed, they are new souls created at birth and having no past behind them, what justice, to say nothing of love, can there be in treating various souls so differently, and how can this be reconciled with the goodness of God? In such circumstances the reason must be laid aside and the ways of the Supreme be accepted on faith as "a mystery"—a solution which is very apt to breed unbelief and discontent in thinking people, who are unable to accept on authority beliefs that seem contrary to common sense.

But humanity had to grow and this was the quickest way. To use a Masonic metaphor, the stone was being rough-hewed in the quarry—a process which requires very different methods from those that are afterwards used for smoothing and polishing the same stones when they are to be placed in position in the Temple of Humanity. Chips fly about in the quarry during rough-hewing, and a humanity that is in process of being built into Brothers needs in the first instance strength rather than refinement, a motive for exertion rather than more advanced teaching which it would as yet be unable to grasp. So the individual was spurred to exertion by the motive of "saving his own soul." "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in

exchange for his soul?" (Matthew viii, 36-7.) It is by effort, by exertion of the will, that he must begin to realise the divinity of his own nature, and will thus become fit to be built, with his fellows, into a Brotherhood capable of understanding and practising the Divine Law of Self-Sacrifice. "All over the Master's place is written the word 'Try.'"

It is not an easy thing to "enter in at the strait gate," which of course means neither to attain to heaven nor to escape from hell, but simply to enter on the Path of Holiness. "Strive to enter in," says the Christ, "at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will strive to enter in and shall not be able" (Luke xiii, 24). The passage certainly goes on to represent the Christ as saying that "the Master of the House" would address those who might fail "to enter in" as follows: "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in *the kingdom of God*" (simply another phrase like "the strait gate" for the Path of Holiness or of Initiation) "and you yourselves thrust out." But it must be remembered that the Gospels do not profess to be authentic and verbatim accounts of the sayings and doings of the Christ. They are carefully described in the Bible itself as the Gospels

according to S. Matthew, S. Mark, etc., and there is no denying that they contradict one another in certain details of fact. The surprising theory of what is called "verbal inspiration" was doubtless evolved by degrees out of a too literal understanding of the poetical expression "the Word of God," which is illuminating if taken to mean that the Bible contains most helpful and necessary instruction for those who would learn and do the will of God, but is very misleading if taken to mean that the Bible is infallible, or that it is "God's Word" in any sense which does not apply also to the Scriptures of the other great religions of the world. The question in what spirit the Scriptures should be approached and studied would well repay attention, but for the present it is sufficient to note that the Christ is exhorting His hearers to strenuous endeavour. That was His immediate aim two thousand years ago—to develop strength in the individual souls, whom at His next Coming—the one now expected—he would build into a Brotherhood. He had first to "build the Brothers," and for that purpose He withdrew from the West all knowledge of reincarnation, although obscure traces of the teaching have been left in the Scriptures, as in the statement about Elias and the story of the man that was born blind, apparently to

facilitate a restoration of the knowledge when the time should come.

It may well be that so far-reaching and drastic a measure as the withdrawal of reincarnation was not adopted even by the Head of the Teaching Department in the great Brotherhood simply on His own responsibility. There is perhaps no irreverence in assuming that, when He did so, He well knew that it was part of the plan of the Supreme Being of our Solar System, by whom the great drama of evolution, which is to be played in these worlds, is thought out in marvellous detail before the worlds are created.

And now the needed quality of strength has to a certain extent been developed, and the time has come for the building of the Brotherhood. The Christian religion was intended for the helping of the fifth sub-race. It was given at the time when the Roman Empire, which belonged to the Keltic or fourth sub-race, was to be dissolved within a few centuries. It was specially intended for the Anglo-Teutonic (the fifth) but has also supplanted the religion of the fourth, and has spread with both sub-races wherever they have gone over the world—in the Americas, North and South, India (as regards its European population), Australasia, and the Cape. The work of the seven sub-races, as in a much more marked way of the seven Root

Races, is to develop and strengthen, each in its turn, one of the subtle vehicles of man. The work of the fourth sub-race (which includes the Keltic race, as known to Ethnology, and also, broadly speaking, the Latin races of South Europe) was to develop and refine the astral body, or body of passions and emotions. In her book *Man*, Mrs. Besant thus describes the new characteristics which were specially developed in the fourth sub-race (of the fifth or Aryan Root Race) in its original home in Central Asia before it was sent forth to people Europe. The Manu, or Divine Official who founded and still guides the whole Aryan Race, was striving to develop in its fourth or Keltic sub-race "imagination and artistic sensibility, to encourage poetry, oratory, painting and music. . . . Any one who showed any artistic talent in the schools was drafted off for special culture."

The work of the fifth (the Anglo-Teutonic) sub-race is to develop the mind, and that of the sixth sub-race (the new physical type now in process of formation in the western States of North America, as well as elsewhere in the world), will be to develop the intuition, which is above the mind, which perceives instead of reasoning, which, by the power of love and compassion, is able to look at the other lives from within instead of from

without, and can at will completely sense their thoughts and feelings.

Now mind is of two kinds—the lower or concrete, dealing with and reasoning about the facts of the physical world and kingdoms, human and other—and the abstract or philosophic mind, dealing with abstract conceptions, with generalisations derived from the working of the lower mind. At the present stage of humanity, it is the lower or concrete mind, rather than the philosophic or abstract, which is in course of evolution; and for this purpose it is necessary to accentuate the sense of separateness in the individual. Hence the strong feeling of individualism and competition, in fact, of selfishness or self-centredness, which is characteristic of Europe as a whole, including even the fourth sub-race, for it is characteristic of the whole fifth, or Āryan, Root Race to which the fourth and fifth sub-races alike belong: and the Christian religion, which was intended to accentuate individuality in the fifth sub-race (by the effort of the individual to "save his own soul"), has spread over all Europe, replacing in the South the earlier religion of Beauty originally given to the fourth sub-race.

For convenience of reference the root and sub-races concerned, with their purposes, and the characteristic notes of the religions of the sub-races, may be tabulated

somewhat as on the following pages (28 and 29).

The quality of the sub-race now developing in America and elsewhere is to be "intuition," the possession of which will make men fit to be built into a Brotherhood, for in their fellow-men, aye, and in their younger brothers of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, they will see as in themselves the one divine Life, and so seeing they will be ready to learn the great lesson of Self-Sacrifice, which will be the distinguishing note of the new religion. The Christ Himself, the Light of the World, is, we are told, about to come among us again in ordinary human form, perhaps somewhere about the year 1930, to tread the common ways of man, just as He did in Palestine two thousand years ago.

The President of the Theosophical Society announced during the Annual Convention of the Indian Section at Christmas, 1912, an interesting dream which she had had, and this dream may, of course, prove to be prophetic. It was to the effect that six years later, that is, at the Convention of Christmas 1918, she would be sitting in the same chair on the same platform and that the course of lectures which has usually been given by herself would then be given by Alcyone (Mr. J. Krishnamurti) who would after-

Root Races	Corresponding Sub-Races of present 5th, or Aryan, Root Race	Vehicles for development of which the Root Races and Corresponding Sub-Races were specially intended	Characteristic note of the Religions of the Sub-Races of the 5th, or Aryan, Root Race	Founders of the Religions of the Sub-Races of the 5th Root Race
4th Root Race—the Atlanteans, who inhabited the lost continent of Atlantis, now beneath the Atlantic Ocean.	4th, or Keltic, Sub-Race (including the Latin-speaking nations of South Europe)	Astral	Art, Beauty and the higher emotions generally, including especially love	Orpheus ("with His Lute") afterwards born in India as Gautama Buddha, Founder of Buddhism

5th Root Race—The Aryans, now inhabiting Europe, America, Australasia, etc.	5th, or Anglo-Teutonic, Sub-Race including Flemings, Dutch, Normans, Scandinavians and Slavs	Mental	Intellect and Individualism	The Christ (known in the East as the Lord Maitreya or the Bodhisattva)
6th Root Race—To be founded in Southern California about 700 years hence, and to inhabit later a new Continent, already beginning to rise from the North Pacific Ocean	6th Sub-Race now forming in the Western States and ultimately to spread over the whole continent of North America	Intuitional (in older Theosophical books called Buddhic)	Unity or Brotherhood	The Christ

wards go up and down India preaching and gathering together large numbers of people, and that some years later his Lord (the Christ) would come and Himself take up the work.

The Religion of Self-Sacrifice which the Christ will found cannot fail to have a far deeper and wider influence and effect on the future of the world even than the Christian religion did; and in saying this there is no intention whatever of minimising or depreciating in the slightest degree the splendid results of Christianity. But while the latter has made its ordinary members religious and church-going, and more or less earnestly desirous of "saving their own souls," and has further produced a small, a *very* small percentage of saints, it is obvious that if the ordinary communicant of the new religion is as anxious to sacrifice himself for his fellow-men as the communicant of to-day is "to go to heaven," the practical results of such a religion will be nothing less than marvellous. When the ordinary Church member realises that he *is* "his brother's keeper," and sets to work to act on that belief, instead of contenting himself as at present with going to Church on Sunday, and devoting nearly the whole of his spare time and money to his own pleasure and amusement and those of his family, then it will be possible to lead him to heights

of achievement in the service of his fellows which are beyond the dreams of to-day. No longer shall we see large numbers of people bent almost entirely on selfish amusement, while the rest of the world is full of poverty and suffering, or at best leading dreary lives practically devoid of the opportunities of culture and refinement which, to a very considerable extent, are open to the rich and well-to-do alone. And who can doubt that the Christ, without solving for us all the human problems of the present, or depriving us of the valuable evolution to be gained from finding the solutions for ourselves, will at least give such broad general directions as may be necessary to enable us to find them? Then, at last, will the nations cease from their quarrellings, and some great organising and administrative genius of the past, Julius Cæsar, for instance, may be reborn in the present to carry out the vast changes that are necessary, as indicated in the detailed glimpse of the future which Mr. Leadbeater has already obtained on higher planes (where the fore-knowledge—not predestination—of the Supreme is at the command of the developed man) and has given to the world in the chapters on "The Beginnings of the Sixth Root Race" in his and Mrs. Besant's book, *Man: Whence, How, and Whither?* In the

chapter headed "The Federation of Nations," Cæsar's future work is thus described:

When he succeeds in forming the Federation, and persuades all the countries to give up War, he arranges that each of them shall set aside for a certain number of years half or a third of the money that it has been accustomed to spend upon armaments, and devote it to certain social improvements which he specifies. According to his scheme, the taxation of the entire world is gradually reduced, but notwithstanding, sufficient money is reserved to feed all the poor, to destroy all the slums, and to introduce wonderful improvements into all cities. He arranges that those countries in which compulsory military service has been the rule shall for a time still preserve the habit, but shall make their conscripts work for the State in the making of parks and roads, the pulling down of slums, and opening up of communications everywhere. He arranges that the old burdens shall be gradually eased off, but yet contrives with what is left of them to regenerate the world. He is indeed a great man, a most marvellous genius.

* * * *

His work is largely made possible by the arrival and preaching of the Christ Himself.

Even those who are not yet aware of the possibility of foreseeing the future on higher planes may still accept this account of Julius Cæsar's work as an interesting forecast of a most desirable consummation.

It is interesting to note that part of the

Christ's great plan for helping the world is already in action, namely, the restoration to the western world of a knowledge of Reincarnation, with its sister teaching, the Law of Karma (literally "doing"), which means that whatever befalls us of weal or woe, of happiness or pain, of joy or grief, is our own "doing." It is the law of cause and effect in the moral world. This law, as it applies to spiritual evolution, is thus stated by S. Paul, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth, to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (meaning apparently that he will continue to pass in successive lives from birth to death—"the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life"—Romans vi, 23) "but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians v, 7), by treading during a short series of lives the Path of Holiness, and finally obtaining the glorious state of Nirvāṇa, which means "liberation" from the long cycle of births and deaths—"salvation," not of course from hell fire, but from the risk of failure to attain during the present world-period the goal of distinctively human evolution, Divine Manhood, the level of "the Masters." It is true that, even after that, he may if he choose still continue, as the Masters do, to incarnate; but, if he does, it is of his own

free will, and for service only, assuredly not for personal satisfaction.

The Law of Karma, or "Doing," is stated by S. Francis of Assisi in its more general form, as it applies to all weal or woe, whether spiritual or worldly, and is worked out for each man from life to life during his long series of lives. He says:

> Whatsoever a man doeth upon this earth, he doeth it unto himself, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

He himself may have known in detail the law which he thus briefly stated, without attempt at further exposition; but the time had not yet come when the full teaching was to be given to the world, for apart from reincarnation the law cannot be properly expounded. It is obvious that, so far as a single life is concerned, the wicked often flourish, while the righteous mourn. As the Psalmist says, "I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree" (Psalms xxxvii, 36).

These twin-sisters, the Laws of Reincarnation and Karma, will probably be taken as axioms by the Christ in the teaching to be given on His reappearance among men. The work of restoring a knowledge of them is being done by the Theosophical Society, of whose teaching

they form a fundamental part. This work, however, is only one of several purposes for which the Society was founded in New York in 1875, its ostensible Founders being a Russian lady, Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and a retired American Officer, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott. The true Founders, behind the veil of ignorance which is upon our eyes, were two of the Divine Men, members of the Great Brotherhood, the Elder Brothers of our race, who have completed Their purely human evolution, and unified, or "at-oned," Their wills with that of the Supreme Being of our Solar System, and now continue to incarnate simply in order to assist in carrying out His great plan of evolution. The names by which these two Masters are known in Theosophical literature are Morya and Koot Hoomi, and we are told that they are the Divine Ministers who have undertaken the task of founding, developing and guiding a new type of humanity, the Sixth Root Race, of which They are to be respectively the Ruler and the Spiritual Teacher—or, to use the Sanskrit equivalents, the Manu (from the same root as the English man and mind meaning the thinker) and the Bodhisaṭṭva (meaning either Wisdom and Purity or He whose nature is Wisdom).

The new Root Race will not be founded

until some seven hundred years hence, but the work of preparation is already afoot. This will be the Sixth out of the seven Root Races, which succeed one another, and each of which largely overlaps in point of time both its predecessor and its successor. Like all the other Root Races, it will have its own type of bodies—physical, astral, and mental—its own religion, and its own type of civilisation. The watchword and distinguishing characteristic both of the religion and civilisation will be "Unity"—a full recognition of and conscious acting upon the great fact that, little though they may know it at present, all men are truly of one and the same essence, and in the inner worlds closely united, brothers indeed, though of very varying ages and capacities, for they are sons of the same Supreme Being, from whom they all emanated (and the so-called lower kingdoms—animal, vegetable, and mineral—no less) and to whom they must all one day return. As S. Augustine said:

> God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are ever restless till they find their rest in Thee.

And S. Paul, in his sermon at Athens on the Unknown God, bears emphatic testimony to the sonship of all men and the Fatherhood of God.

> Neither is (God) worshipped with man's

hands as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things. And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth . . . that they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live and move and have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, etc. (Acts xvii, 25-29.)

And again, as regards the ultimate return to Him from whom we came forth:

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all (I Corinthians xv, 27, 28).

This is the Divinely appointed, and therefore sure, end of all evolution—that God may be all in all.

The Poet Pope has remarked in his *Essay on Man:*

In human things, tho' laboured on with pain,
A hundred movements scarce one subject gain:
In God's one single can its end produce
And serve to second still some other use.

Similarly, if the Theosophical Society is indeed an instrument created for the pur-

poses of Their work by two appointed Agents of the Supreme, we may expect to find that it serves more purposes than one; and such is actually the case. There may, of course, be purposes which They had in view, and of which at present we know nothing; but there are at least four which are already clearly visible.

First, to comply with a wish uttered, we are told, by the World-Teacher some six centuries ago, that in the last quarter of each century, as time rolled by, a special effort should be made for the helping of the West. The Society was founded, punctually to time, towards the close of the last year of the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

Second, to act, as already stated, as a channel for the restoration of the knowledge of Reincarnation, Karma, and the Path of Holiness.

Third, to play the part of S. John the Baptist, by acting as the herald of the return of the Christ. This statement needs, perhaps, some further explanation, for it is well-known that the Society has no creed, and that its members, as such, are in no way committed to a belief in that return. Yet in a very real sense it *is* acting as such a herald, inasmuch as large numbers of its members do believe in the return, and from its ranks have been drawn a large proportion of the members of "the

Order of the Star in the East," and the whole "Temple of the Rosy Cross," founded respectively in 1911 and 1912, for the avowed purpose of preparing the way for His Coming. Further, the Master Koot Hoomi (one of the real Founders of the Society) is, we are told, the immediate Lieutenant (in the Teaching Department) and the destined successor of the World-Teacher; and, as the plans of the Masters are always laid long, sometimes thousands of years, beforehand, there can be little doubt that this function of preparing the way for the Christ was clearly in His mind when the Society was founded—only forty years ago. The Orders named are, of course, in their infancy, but their progress has been so surprisingly rapid that they are already well established in many countries, and bid fair to become important and world-wide organisations, as indeed they must be if they are to do the world-service of preparation for this unique event.

Fourth, the Society was intended to act as a net for the selection of the souls who are to be pioneers under the Masters Morya and Koot Hoomi in the work of founding the Sixth Root Race. The note of Brotherhood, which will be the keynote of the coming race, civilisation, and religion, is sounded by Them in the world through the medium of the Society, and the souls

choose themselves, in virtue of their being attracted by and responding to it. It is not, of course, to be supposed that every member of the Society will be chosen to act as a pioneer of the new Race; but from its ranks, and still more, perhaps, from the Esoteric School which is the heart of the Society, will the pioneers be chosen. The Society has three avowed objects:

(1) To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, class or colour.

(2) To encourage the study of comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science; and

(3) To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

But of these three the first alone is made compulsory for acceptance by candidates for admission; and this was no doubt done deliberately, in order that the Society might act as a net for the first rough selection of souls, from among whom a further selection might afterwards be taken to be the pioneers of the coming Sixth Root Race, being the first to be born into bodies of the new type, which will be very different from the present Fifth. On these will fall the task of building up, under the immediate supervision of the Manu and Bodhisattva, living in the flesh among them, the new and

truly co-operative civilization in which Brotherhood will be no longer a dream, but an accomplished fact. There will be, as there ever must, division of labour, but neither race, creed, sex, class, nor colour, will be felt as involving the slightest feeling of separateness. The present barriers between man and man will have totally disappeared, and no occupation will be looked upon as in any sense whatever less honourable than any other.

The true relation of Theosophy to the existing religions of the world may best be understood by looking upon it as in the nature of a special Mission from the Metropolitan Church of the world—the Great Brotherhood who are the real Founders of every Religion in turn—a Mission intended not for the benefit of any one religion in particular, but to aid them all impartially, as indeed it does in two ways: (1) by re-proclaiming in terms of modern thought and language the fundamental verities of religion, which had become overlaid in course of time by the inevitable tendency to materialise and to substitute for the spirit the outer husk of symbolism in which the truths were originally conveyed; and (2) by bringing to the aid of the orthodox priesthood who are conscientiously handing on a lamp of tradition derived from books, the living and forcible testimony of seers—the

teachers in the Society—who speak from first-hand knowledge. These are able and willing to throw a flood of light on the mysteries of God, Man, and Nature, with a host of details, many of which are now for the first time given to the world—details as to the existence of higher planes, subtler and to us invisible worlds of matter, and their relations with the physical world—the conditions of after-death life in purgatory and the heaven-world—the process and machinery of reincarnation —the Divine Hierarchy and their work—the existence and nature of the Path of Holiness—and the qualifications necessary for treading it.

The Theosophical Society, which now has branches in nearly all the countries of the world, is in perfect harmony (on its own side at least) with all religions, and does its best to help them all in so far as they will allow themselves to be helped. "Theosophy does not ask a man to leave his own religion but to live it." People of all faiths are welcomed, and find in Theosophy a common platform of sympathy and study, while remaining free to hold the faith and follow the practices of their own religions, if they so choose, as many do. The practice of imposing certain articles of belief as a condition of membership is so universal in religious bodies that it comes as an agreeable

surprise to inquirers about Theosophy to be told that no person's religious beliefs are asked upon his joining, nor is interference with them allowed, while, on the other hand, he is expected to show to the religion of his fellow members the same respect which he receives for his own. The three avowed objects of the Society are such as may well be accepted by all tolerant persons. They commit the members to no belief except the desirability of doing three fairly reasonable things, and even of these objects it is only the first—to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity—of which acceptance is compulsory. Tolerance in religious matters is thus carried to its farthest point, and the leaders of the Society teach (though the acceptance of this, as of every other teaching save Brotherhood, is entirely optional) that the virtue of tolerance should be carried to the point of not wishing to change other people in any respect, except in so far as they themselves wish to be advised. It is held that—

> What another man does or says or believes is no affair of ours and we must learn to let him absolutely alone. He has full right to free thought and speech and action, so long as he does not interfere with anyone else (*At the Feet of the Master*).

The Society is thus a body of students,

committed to no common belief except Brotherhood, and desirous only of helping the world in the pursuit of Divine truth. In the fact of its having been founded—"behind the veil"—by members of the one Great Brotherhood, it is exactly like all the religions of the world; but in its special method of working it differs, inasmuch as each religion separates its adherents from those of other religions, while now for the first time the experiment is being tried of creating a body of men which shall know no borders, shall insist on no ceremonial, no particular method of work, and be bound to no belief, save only that in nature and essence all men are brothers. In its strong insistence on brotherhood, the Society is doing its best to promote love in the world, and is, of course, in perfect accord with the Christian religion—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans xiii, 9 and 10). It is thus manifestly doing the will of God, and must have His blessing upon it. The Divine Men who were the true Founders continue to give it Their blessing and to be for it a channel of divine grace, which must flow through the members of the Society, exactly as it flows through the members of each religion from the Divine Man who, "behind the veil," is the living and duly appointed Head of that religion.

That subtle but all-compelling power never forces its way into any heart: "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation iii, 20); but every son of God (*i.e.*, every man in the world) can and does make himself a channel for it, in proportion as he attempts, however feebly, to "open the door," by bringing his own will into harmony with that of the Supreme. Of this power, subtle in its action but very manifest in its results, the Christ said:

> The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit (John iii, 8).

And to quote another religion, the same thing is expressed differently but very beautifully in the *Sayings of Mohammed:*

> God saith . . . whoso seeketh to approach me one span, I seek to approach one cubit; and whoso seeketh to approach one cubit, I seek to approach two fathoms; and whoso walketh towards me, I run towards him.

Just in proportion as the Society is successful in acting as a channel for the blessing of its true Founders, so must it bring effective help to the world at large and to the religions of the world. It is still

small in numbers compared with the religions, but it has branches in all parts of the world and exerts an influence out of all proportion to its numbers, not only through the people who come into it without leaving their own religions and are thus able to spread its teachings among their fellow religionists, but quite as much through the numbers of earnest and thoughtful people who without actually joining its ranks study its literature, and become permeated with its splendid tolerance and most helpful teachings.